

**House Federal and State Affairs Committee
Opposition to SCR No. 1602
February 13, 2025
Sister Therese Bangert, Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth**

**Chair Kessler and Committee,
Thank YOU for the opportunity to give testimony in opposition to SCR No. 1602.**

I am Sister Therese Bangert, a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth for 61 years and for 38 of those years I have lobbied in the Kansas Legislature.

First, I want to be clear that I agree that we have a broken immigration system, and I have along with the Catholic Church that is my Faith Home have advocated with our Federal Lawmakers for years asking them to pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform. The no-system that is currently in place has enabled essential workers to work in Kansas but not have a legal way to enter or to stay. I suspect these are the immigrant women milking cows in the Western Kansas dairies, men and women on the killing floors in the Kansas slaughter houses and those roofing the homes in my neighborhood.

Line 13 of the resolution states that “the main priority of this massive operation is the deportation of illegal immigrants who have committed crimes”. Though the purported concern of the Trump administration’s deportations is those who have committed crimes, press releases that I have read in the past two weeks do not bear this out. The women who are milking the cows but do not have work permits are still vulnerable to deportation. That is a concern that I bring.

Lines 5 and 6 on page 2 of the Resolution state “fostering a legal immigration system that meets the needs of the state and our country” . . . I hope that fostering this legal immigration system will include the law-abiding immigrants in our country who are Kansans in every way but for papers.

Personally, I find troubling the heated rhetoric used when speaking about our sisters and brothers that are immigrants/the aliens Jesus speaks of in the Gospel. At times the language is dehumanizing. The immigrants I know are family values people who want the same things for their children that I want for my son, nieces and nephews. They are people of Faith who work hard and long hours. I witness them being builders and rebuilders. Again, I want Kansas authorities to have the tools they need to address those who are violent criminals.

I close with a quote from the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth’s Community Stance in 2011: While acknowledging the right of the United States to control its borders and that the issue of immigration is complex, we also recognize the suffering caused to separated families, exploited workers and those forced to flee from their homelands by poverty, hunger and other forms of violence. In light of our mission statement, we, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, call for Comprehensive Immigration Reform in our country.

Thank YOU for hearing me and Peace.

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